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769 or devoured by small boys. In the home a lamp may be lit each evening before the tablets.

769 Ancestral temples are usually found in the country at the family nest,
778 where all the neighbors may be relatives and bear the same surname. There
346 are, however, eight such temples in the city of Anking. They are oblong enclosures, as indeed nearly all Chinese temples are, about one hundred feet long by forty wide, and in the country are usually surrounded by evergreens except in front. The roofs are not curved. They contain three halls directly behind each other, separated by open courts in which trees are planted on either side. First comes the entrance hall, where coffins are often stored, then a room used as a school for the children of the clan or at other times as a meeting place, and lastly the hall of the ancestors. The main doors are not ordinarily open and entrance is made through a side door into the first court. On these main doors are often painted two mythological worthies who act as spiritual doorkeepers. When a man has obtained high rank in the public examinations, a pole something like a Chi Kan is erected before his family temple.

769 Against the back wall of the hall of the ancestors, which is also the rear
346 of the temple, are arranged a series of shelves like rising steps, and on these
778 are the tablets, called Shen Chu, one generation to a shelf, with the founder
212 of the family in the middle of the highest level. The tablets are made of wood and are approximately a foot high and eight inches wide. On them is written the name of the man, his wife and male children, and the characters Chih Wei, meaning his seat or place. These two words are also found on the tablets of gods and great men. Before the tablets is a table or altar, usually of carved wood, on which are five sacrificial vessels, usually of bronze. The central vessel is for incense, the others are pairs, two vases next the incense burner, and two candlesticks on the outside. I have been told the vases are for herbs but I have never seen them there. These five vessels are found on the altar of every Chinese temple, whether Confucian, Buddhist or Taoist.

551 Every Chinese has in addition to his surname, which is in most cases
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but one syllable, a number of other names used by different people and under different circumstances; a name used by his parents and grandparents, one used by his familiar friends, a school name, one for formal use as on visiting cards, and so on. The name which is placed on the tablet in the ancestral temple is called the P'u Ming. Each clan possesses a poem containing a certain number of syllables, and each one of these syllables or characters is used in turn to identify a generation of the family, so that the whole cycle will be in the neighborhood of twenty generations. The temple name consists of two characters, usually the first the name of the generation and the second that of the individual. The surname is not put on the tablet, where it would be superfluous, but it appears over the main entrance to the temple. Clan records go back for hundreds and sometimes thousands of years, as in the family of Confucius, and since a man may have children after he has become a grand-father, it is not unusual to have representatives of all the generations of the family cycle alive at the same time. The head of the clan is called the Hu Chen, and the representatives of different branches of the family, who meet for the annual sacrifice, are called Fang Chang or Wen Si.

At ordinary times the temple is cared for by poor members of the clan who live on the premises. They light candles on the altar on the 1st and 15th of each month, and keep incense always burning before the tables. This incense is usually made in a conical spiral about two feet high and when lighted at one end it will burn for a long time, suspended from a hook above the altar. Food is not formally offered to the ancestors in the temple except at the Ta Chi, or great sacrifice.

The ritual of this sacrifice is of great antiquity, and is the foundation of the sacrifices to great men, to Confucius, and of the emperor to heaven and earth, all of which have the same general form. In fact, it may be called the essence of Confucian religion, and educated Chinese indignantly deny that it has any taint of Buddhism or Taoism. It will be worth while, then, to give an account of it in some detail.

The great sacrifice (Ta Chi), is distinguished from the small sacrifice